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Food and Drug Administration
Veterinary Health Division

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am concerned about the use of antibiotics which are of value in fighting human disease in the routine care of livestock. I have read only a half-dozen or so articles in the press over the years on this subject, so I do not consider myself particularly knowledgeable. However, this is an opportunity to express my concern that the USDA carefully weigh the pros and cons and bear in mind that we have only had 70 years of reprieve from terrible diseases due to antibiotic use. To lose the efficacy of these medical tools simply to increase the profitability of food production of a non-essential food product would be incredibly stupid.

I say "non-essential" because since 1987 I have not purchased meat from mammals, and only infrequently (two or three times/month) consume poultry. I am far healthier than many of my peers of age 52 who have diets high in meat. I do eat either fish, dairy products or eggs every day, so I am concerned about the well-being and health of dairy cattle and poultry. I eat eggs from free-range organically-fed chickens and try to purchase cheese, yogurt, milk, and butter from organically fed cattle whenever I have the opportunity. I therefore feel that my eating habits cannot be held hostage by those who say they cannot produce these kinds of food without the use of antibiotics.

As a life-long supporter of conservation of water, soil, and natural resources, the decision was easy to make. I learned that the amount of water and land to produce a pound of meat protein was over ten times the amount required for the same amount of vegetable protein, including many kinds of beans and mushrooms. Dairy products and eggs are intermediate in impact. Did you know this fact?

I am concerned about the well-being of the animals that provide my food, but I think that the prophylactic use of antibiotics is not defensible. I urge USDA to look out for the interests of humanity and the environment and the profitability of farming. Hopefully all those interests can be supported by intelligent decisions.

Sincerely,

Kay Stewart

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